



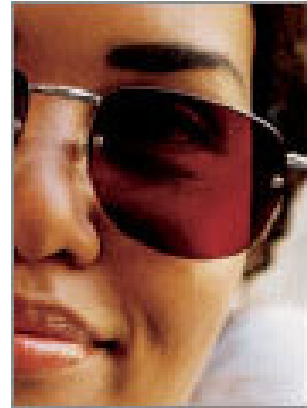
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Want to look as chic as Jessica Simpson or as chill as Brad Pitt this summer in your new sunglasses?

You can - and protect your eyes at the same time.

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WebMD Feature

Reviewed By Charlotte Grayson, MD



This summer, those in the know say that women will sport oversized, colorful plastic sunglasses.

Think Jackie O meets Jessica Simpson and the Olsen Twins, predicts Michelle Lynn Walnum, the public relations director at A-list sunglass house Oliver Peoples in Los Angeles. Last year Jessica wore white sunglasses, this year she is going green, Walnum tells WebMD.

"I don't think anything can be too big this year," agrees Jean Scott, vice president of product development for the Luxottica group, a sunglass designer and manufacturer headquartered in Milan, Italy.

You'll also see, "more crystals, more bling, more glitz, and a plethora of fabulous colors," she says. "This is probably the most colorful year I have ever seen," she says.

Even better, you don't have to sacrifice style for safety when you choose your new summer sunglasses. "The bigger the frame, the better the

protection. Some years, that doesn't work because such glasses aren't as stylish," says Paul Dougherty, MD, medical director of Dougherty Laser Vision and a clinical instructor at the Jules Stein Eye Institute at the University of Los Angeles in California.

Go for Sunglasses with Style - and UV Protection

But trends aside, "The most important aspect is choosing sunglasses with 100% ultraviolet (UV) protection that blocks up to 400 nanometers," Dougherty says. "This is maximum protection and that's what you want," he says.

"There may be a sticker on the lens or frame, but not always so you may have to ask the salesperson," Dougherty adds.

And you don't have to spend as much as Jessica or Brad to get the same look. "There isn't a direct relationship between price and protection," he says, "You can get a \$10 pair of sunglasses with 100% UV protection or a \$1,000 pair," he says.

Another buzzword in the sunglass community is polarized. But don't be fooled or talked out of your hard-earned money. "Polarized doesn't mean it blocks UV rays. It just cuts down on glare, which is important from a comfort standpoint only," Dougherty says.

Sunglass lenses will come in all colors this year, from brown, amber, and copper to green, gray, rose, and blue. "Choose whichever looks best, as there is no relationship between color and UV protection," Dougherty says.

In fact, "dark lenses with no UV protection are worse for the eye than light lenses with UV protection because the dark color allows pupils to dilate and be more susceptible to UV damage," he says. UV protection is actually just a special coating put on lenses regardless of whether they are pink, blue, or green.

However, for the millions of Americans who have undergone laser eye surgery, lighter lenses are the way to go. "Choose amber, green, brown, blue, or yellow because your pupils won't dilate and your vision will be better as a result," he says. Consider the gold-rimmed aviator-style sunglasses with green lenses, which experts predict will have a second coming this summer.

Many sunglasses come as wraparounds meaning that they don't just stop at the temple. Instead, they curve around toward the ear with either a wide frame or a lens. "This blocks reflected UV light and gives additional protection for your eyes," Dougherty says.

Plus it gives you more room for design. "Sides of frames are embellished with crystals this year so that your glasses can become a conversation piece," says Rene Soltis, a Whitehall, Penn.-based optician and spokesperson for the Vision Council of America.

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